



# Planning a Great Decision-Making Meeting

## Why go this route?

- Because you want to hold effective and efficient meetings.
- Because you want to choose the best decision-making method.
- Because you want to involve all of the necessary stakeholders.
- Because you want to use limited time effectively and efficiently.
- Because you want to engage all members of the team in making the decision.
- Because you want to positively impact student achievement.

## You'll know you've arrived when...

- Pre-planning time is set aside... and used.
- All members of the team are clear on the mission of the meeting.
- Members of the team understand the impact this decision will have on student achievement.
- Members of the team participate in the meeting.
- The team stays focused on the decision/task at hand.
- The objective of the meeting was met.
- All members of the team will support the decision.
- The decision is aligned to your school improvement plan, school mission and the goals and objectives of your school.

### Construction Zone

- Prepare, prepare, prepare! Clarify in advance the decision and how it will impact student achievement.
- Make sure you have the input and resources you need; and the team has the agenda and materials in time to come prepared.
- Ensure that you've identified the diverse voices that need to be heard for a good decision.



### It's about TIME

- 1-2 hours for preplanning




### Potential COSTS

- Copies
- Snacks (if desired)

## The Process

*A step-by-step guide  
to planning decision-  
making meetings for  
maximum impact*

**NOTE:** Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

**1 Determine the decision that is to be made.** Clarify the outcome you need from the meeting.

INSERTS A and B for Step 1 suggest ideas to keep in mind.

**2 Determine who should make the decision.**

The group should have access to the voices of each stakeholder group that will be impacted by the decision—teachers, parents, students, para-professionals, cooks, custodians, recess aides, administrators. Look for a group whose “charter” either includes all stakeholders, or includes the responsibility to gather and honor their input. If no such group exists, convene one. See MI-Map Packet 8:1 “Developing School Decision-making Teams” for a sample “charter” that clarifies the group’s responsibilities.

**3 Decide the roles** participants will play in the meeting.

For instance, will the group need a convenor, notetaker, timekeeper, facilitator, process observer?

**4 Determine how decisions will be made.**

INSERTS A and B for Step 4 suggest a range of options and criteria for deciding which option best fits your situation.

**5 Determine what information** or opinions are needed prior to the meeting, in order for the participants to do their work.

You may need to survey stakeholders who are not part of the team, formally or informally. Distribute any requests for information well in advance and include a date by which responses should be returned.

**6 Prepare an agenda** and distribute it in advance to participants and stakeholders.

INSERT for Step 6 is a sample agenda that you can modify to meet your needs.

**7 At the meeting** ensure that participants

- are introduced, including information about their roles.
- understand ground rules for the meeting. (See INSERT A for Step 7)
- hear any input from stakeholders not present.
- understand and follow the decision-making method that applies.
- plan how to communicate the decision (and rationale) to stakeholders. (Remember that you can publish or post a newsletter or report.)
- evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting.

## Getting more mileage from planning for effective meetings

*How taking the plan off the shelf (and using it to steer by) benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:*

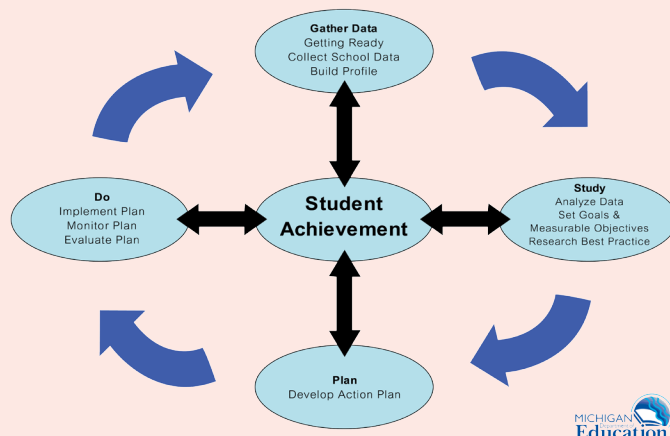
### **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**

- Schools making good decisions about student achievement will move forward toward Adequate Yearly Progress.
- To meet the accountability standards of ESEA, schools must include all stakeholders in effective decision-making.

### **State Accreditation System**

- Many complex decisions will need to be made by groups of diverse stakeholders in order to promote continuous improvement.

### **Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process (Mi-CSI) Michigan School Improvement Framework**



This packet provides direction on how to engage members of the team in the process of making good decisions. It provides models of ground rules, decision-making methods, communication techniques, and how to evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting. These provide the basis for continued improvement conversations.



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## Resources

### *Books, Articles, Websites*

#### **Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In**

Roger Fisher and William Ury.  
New York: Viking Press, 1991.

This common sense approach to seeking shared interests underlying differing positions has been helpful to contract negotiating teams. It also can be helpful in resolving principled stands about strategy choices.

#### **The Wisdom of Teams**

Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith.  
New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc, 1993.

The authors dismiss touchy-feely “pseudo-teams” in favor of productive, focused ones who gel because they face together a specific, outcome-defined challenge.

#### **Facilitation at a Glance! 2nd Edition**

Ingrid Bens. GOAL/QPC, 2008.

Tools, techniques, and checklists for facilitating effective meetings.

#### **Education World**

Planning Great Meetings

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_admin/archives/greatmeetings.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/archives/greatmeetings.shtml)

### *People*

Intermediate School Districts/RESAs can serve as a resource.

#### **For more information, contact:**

Michigan Department of Education

Office of Education  
Improvement and Innovation  
517-241-3147

School Improvement Unit  
517-373-8480

Curriculum and Instruction Unit  
517-241-4285

Office of Assessment  
and Accountability  
517-373-0048

Office of Early Childhood  
and Family Services  
517-241-3592

Office of Field Services  
517-373-3921

Office of Professional Preparation  
and Teacher Certification  
517-373-6505

Office of Special Education  
and Early Intervention Services  
517-373-9433

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